## SOME LIBRARY PROBLEMS OF TO-MORROW

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## SOME LIBRARY PROBLEMS OF TO-MORROW.

WHEN the American Library Association was organized its object was declared to be "to promote the library interests of the country by exchanging views, reaching conclusions, and inducing co-operation in all departments of bibliothecal science and economy; by disposing the public mind to the founding and improving of libraries, and by cultivating good will among its members." When the Constitution was revised in 1900, the object of the Association was declared to be "to promote the welfare of libraries in America."

This change is significant, not of a change in the purposes of the Association, but of a general opinion that verbose details of its purposes are now unnecessary. At first the Association undertook much direct missionary work, but this has gradually been taken in charge by state and local associations to such an extent that our work in this direction is now mainly to obtain records of the methods which have been found most successful, and to bring these to the attention of those directly engaged in interesting the people at large, and legislators and tax-payers in particular, in the establishment and support of free public libraries.

It is the welfare of the free public library, and especially the library intended mainly for the circulation of books for home use among the people, and supported from public funds, to which we have given the most attention. This is especially an American institution and it

has seemed more important that its uses and needs should be understood and appreciated by the general public than those of purely reference libraries, since these last are fairly well understood by those who most need and use them.

The main argument in favor of the free public library is that it is an essential part of a system of free public instruction which is a necessary foundation of a satisfactory system of self government. It is not true, however, that any and every system of education tends to produce a stable democracy, and there are great differences of opinion among profe sional educators, and still greater differences of opinion among other thinking men will know something of the methods and results of our public schools, as to whether our present system is the best one. If the main object of the school and of the teacher is to furnish information and cultivate the memory, there is good ground for objecting to both the quantity and quality of some of the kinds of information . supplied. If the object of education is to develop the intellect, to teach the student how to judge as to what is true and to know where to look for it, to recognize wise thought, and to distinguish the man who is qualified to lead from the incompetent man who wants to lead, then our public school system is not well suited to its purpose.

The relations which should exist between the system of public librarie and the system of public schools in a State or city are not yet generally agreed upon by be h librarians and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> President's address to the American Library Association, June 17, 1902,

eachers. In a general way it may be said hat the libraria view is that the public library should be entirely independent of the public school sweem as regards its funds and management, the special school libraries are apt to be badly managed, and inefficient for the purpose of interesting and instructing the children, that the lib, arian knows more about books than the teacher, and can supplement and broaden the teacher's work : - and that teachers should recognize these facts, should be willing and anxious to receive instruction and advice from librarians by listening to lectures and talks at the library and repeating to their classes what they have been taught, and urging the children to make use of the library.

A few enthusiasts claim that the librarian ought to know more than any teacher, and should supplement the defects and ignorance of each instructor in his own branch, but treat them all kindly and tactfully, recognizing that it is not their fault that they do not know as much as librarians. Some librarians admit that some teachers may know more than they do as to the reading most desirable to supplement the particular instruction which a class is receiving, and will be glad to receive lists of books wanted. All librarians think it very imporant that the child should learn to use the public library and become acquainted with its att actions, methods, and resources, so that after leaving school he will continue to use it, and they do not consider that any mere school or class library can be a satisfactory substitute for the public library. Moreover, they want the children to come to the public library and use it because this is a means of bringing their parents and frierds under the same influence.

Superintendence of schools, as a rule, take a somewhat different view of the matter, that is, if they have given any thought to it, but I am bound to say that many of them reply to questions on the subject, that they have never given it any special consideration. Some of those who have considered the matter say that, of course, the peoplic library is a useful institution, that its chif use is educational, that it should be many does not be public.

school as much as possible, but that it should not interfere with school methods. They believe that the school should have a library of its own, under its own management, selected with reference to the needs of the different classes and grades, that the teachers should see that the children use these books, and have a record of such use as a guide to dealing in the best way with the individual child. They say that the public library, in its recent arrangements for attracting children and especially those in the lower grades, tends to interfere with the school plans for reading, that the children find in the library much that is more attractive than the books which they can find in the school library, but which is also less useful; that they acquire the habit of desultory reading, and are led off from the proper course. The junior teachers in the schools in our larger cities stand in somewhat the same relation to the superintendents that the junior assistants in the public library stand to the librarian, and the opinions of each, while interesting, are not conclusive. At present the majority of teachers in the lower grades know and care very little about the public libraries; they may use them to obtain current fiction, but it seldom occurs to them to take their classes to them or to tell the children what they can find there.

At present it appears that the librarians are more aggressive, energetic, and filled with the missionary and proselytizing spirit than are the teachers, possibly because the work of the latter is more monotonous and fatiguing.

I have several times been asked by legislators and jurists whether the public schools and the public libraries could not wisely be consolidated under one central management and thus be made to work harmoniously.

It is theoretically possible, but I think that the result would be that the libraries would lose much, the schools gain very little, and the public at large be profoundly dissatisfied.

The Library Association has a special committee on co-operation with the Library Department of the National Educational Association, and it is to be hoped that this com-

mittee will find a satisfactory solution to the problems connected with the relationship of the library to the school. No hard and fast rules can be established, but it would seem that the library, supported by public funds. should not interfere with the work of the public school. On the other hand, one of the most important functions of the school is to train the children to use books and libraries, and at the present time the chief obstacle to the proper performance of this function is that the teachers themselves are in great need of instruction about public libraries and how to use them. For the great majority of children story books and works on general literature of the right kind are not only more interesting but more important means of education than the average textbooks.

The class which, at present, far outnumbers all other classes in this country is, as Professor Bryce says, the group of "thinly educated persons whose book knowledge is drawn from dry manuals in mechanically taught elementary schools, and who in after life read nothing but newspapers or cheap novels." 1

Those who have had practical experience in free circulating libraries know the truth of this characterization, and are trying to get the children interested in the library as early as possible; if the library proves more attractive than the school it is quite possible that the school methods should be changed. But whatever may be thought of elective studies in the high school and college course, the public library system of instruction must necessarily be largely elective; and mere amusement should not be the leading elective, as seems to be too often the case.

In recent years the subject of co-operation between libraries and librarians has been one to which much thought has been given and for which a great number of plans have been proposed. To secure the most useful co-operation, it is desirable to bring into the work many libraries which are not intended for the circulation of books, except, perhaps, among a limited class, and some of which are not supported by public funds. These include the libraries belonging to the general government and to the states, university libraries, and the larger libraries belonging to and managed by private corporations, either as reference libraries only, but for the use of the general public, or as reference and lending libraries for the use of members, stockholders, or subscribers only. Among these are many scientific, historical, and technical libraries.

The problems of these reference libraries have been receiving increasing attention in the Association in recent years, as is shown by the organization of a section devoted more especially to their work, and the subject of co-operation will come up for discussion at this meeting in several ways and will, no doubt, be considered from several different points of view. The question, as it appears to most libraries, is, What can the greater libraries do for us in the way of cataloguing, bibliography, lending of books, efc., with the tacit assumption that whatever they can do, they ought to do.

It does not seem necessary to produce arguments in favor of this view, but perhaps a suggestion that the smaller 1 praries should, on their side, assist the larger ones so far as they can, may not be out of plac.

The public library in tais country, which now stands, or should stand, second, if not first, in interest to every librarian is the Library of Congress. I feel it to be a duty as well as a pleasure to report to you that the work of this library is being well done, and that Congress has recognized the wisdom and tact of its librarian by increased appropriations for books and for service. You are all familiar with the work being don by this central library for other libraries throughout the country by furnishing catalogue cards, bibliographical data, etc. I think it well, however, to remind you of your deties to this your National Library, and especially that the librarian of every city, town, or village in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> James Bryce, Studies in history and jurisprudence. N.Y., 1901, p. 200.

country, should make it his or her business to see that one copy of every local, non-copyrighted imprint, including all municipal reports and documents, all reports of local institutions, and all addresses, accounts of ceremonies, etc., which are not copyrighted and do not come into the book trade, is promptly sent to our National Library.

I cannot speal so positively and definitely about the state libraries or the great reference libraries of the country, but most of them will be glad to receive such local publications as I have indicated, and the New York Public Library especially desires assistance of this kind.

The controver y between the individualists and the collectivists which is going on in many fields of human activity exists also among those in erested in library organization and management and is taking much the same course ther; as in commerce and manufactures. The tindency is towards organization and division of labor, at first by co-operation, later by corsolidation. The free public library is tending to become a special industry by unification of methods for the purpose of securing the greatest product with the least expenditure. The general public, and many librarians, think hat the measure of greatest product is the unber of books circulated. This is the argument used with city officials to secure increased propriations, and the kind of books which will circulate most rapidly and the methods of alvertising which will increase the number of re: ders are matters of much interest to library trustees and managers. From this commercial point of view much remains to be done in the way of co-operation. It is probable that the co-operative cataloguing now under way could be much facilitated, and a considerable saving to individual libraries effected if one at all committee of experts selected all the boos to be purchased for each and every library These books could then be catalogued, with annotations on the most elaborate plan, classed, marked and delivered to the several libraries, where, of course, they would go on open shelves and he advertised

by co-operative short lists. The libraries could then discharge most of their cataloguers and experts. One-half the money now used for salaries could be devoted to buying books, the circulation would increase and the business would flourish.

Moreover, this committee of experts for the selection of books to be purchased would naturally be consulted by publishers as to what particular varieties of literature are most in demand. It would suggest subjects and writers, read MSS. and indicate the pictures which would stimulate the circulation of the volume, and not be objectionable to any one. From this, it would be an easy step to undertake the publication of books for free public libraries and thus effect a wonderful reduction in cost; and if the librarians take up the business of bookselling the scheme will be still more neat and compact.

I need not go into further details, or show what might be effected for the world's progress by simply extending this scheme to an international system; no doubt you can all readily imagine the results which might be obtained by a great cosmopolitan free circulating library trust with the latest attachments and improvements. We should then have accomplished an important part, what some consider the most important part, of the original object of the Association, which, you will remember, was declared to be the "reaching conclusions and inducing co-operation in all departments of bibliothecal science and economy." Of course, in the formation of the expert Board of Managers, the demand for representation which will be made by the leaders and managers of different religious, political, and sociological sects and parties would require consideration, and there are some other important details to be considered by the Committee on Co-operation when it takes up this part of its work.

I do not think there is any immediate prospect of the formation of such a free public library trust as I have indicated, or that the cheapening of library service in this way is desirable, even if it were possible, but there are many things in the mechanical details of library

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economy in which co-operative work may be of service without checking or interfering with individual development.

Circulating libraries supported from public funds will naturally tend to greater uniformity in methods and scope than reference libraries supported by corporations, but each has something to learn from the other.

There are some men — and women — who have a great desire for uniformity, who think there is only one best way; they want codes, and rules, and creeds; they want all schools and high schools and universities to have one system, even to the periods of their vacations; they want a rule about fiction, and about classification, and about salaries for all libraries, and they want resolutions passed about all these things.

Concentration has its evils as well as its advantages. Some excellent library work in our large cities is done by institutions or societies which use the library as a means to secure attention to their special end, which may be religious, sectarian, humanitarian, or sociological. The friendly rivalry of different libraries in the same city often has good results, though perhaps it may be a little wasteful of money. To secure the use of a library, the energy and enthusiasm of a propagandist are very useful, but the propagandist does not work to the best advantage in a systematic hierarchy. It is the old question of the individual worker or dealer versus the co-operative, or the consolidated establishment, and while the ultimate answer may be in favor of the latter as giving the greatest amount of useful results with the least expenditure of force, we can understand the feelings of the individual worker who fears that he will be crowded out, and who says that "the lion and the lamb may lie down together, but the same lamb don't do it again."

It must be remembered that almost every change in the manner of doing things is injurious to some individuals. Evolution affects not only the fittest, but also the unfit. If it be true that the public library is injuring the business of the bookseller, that the hustling administrator is crowding out the scholar in

library positions, and that od-fashioned readers find their old resorts in the libraries less comfortable because of the rowd which now frequents them, it may still be true that the general result is satisfactory.

The question as to whether the public library shall undertake to do other work for the public benefit besides the supplying of literature has occasionally been raised, but has not been seriously discussed as a general proposition. When Mr. Carnegie's offer to provide branch library buildings for the city of New York was made public, many suggestions were made as to the desirability of making these buildings something more than libraries. For example, it was advised that they should be made social centres and substitutes for the saloon, that they should have lecture coms, rooms for playing various kinds of games, smoking rooms, and billiard rooms and even public baths in the basement were recommended. At the present time, in a large and crowded city, the need and demand for public library facilities is so great that is las seemed best to confine the work of these buildings to library work proper, but in more scattered communities, where sites are not so costly, and meetingrooms less easy to be obtained, some of these suggestions are worthy of ca eful consideration, and it might be well to col :ct the experience of the members of the Ass ciation bearing on this question, and make it a subject for discussion at a future meeting

As usual, during the payear, there have been some public expressions of doubt as to the utility or expediency of circulating libraries. Mr. Howells suggests that we may be in danger of reading too much, "reading to stupidity." Lord Rosebery also warns us to beware lest much reading should destroy independence of thought, reterring to the "immense fens of stagnant literature which can produce nothing but intellectual malaria." Of course, in some particular asses reading does produce had results. It would, no doubt, be better for the public in general, and for their own families in particular, if some men and some women had never lear, ed to read. "On

a barren rock seeds do not grow - but neither does grass It might also be better for the world if so e sickly, deformed, degenerate children did ot live, and the jail fevers of the eighteenth entury probably disposed of some criminals to he best advantage; nevertheless it has been found to be wise economy to spend consider ble sums of money in lessening the mortality of infants, and of jails, in the inspection and regulation of tenement houses, and in the compulsory restraint of contagious diseases, because the majority of the lives thus save are worth saving, and they cannot be saved without preserving some others who from the mere utilitarian point of view may not be worth the cost.

The expenditure of public funds upon free libraries is in like lanner justified by the general belief that it wil do more good than harm. We cannot yet for hish satisfactory statistical evidence as to the results of the free public library experimen which we are trying on a large scale; there loes not yet seem to be any marked decrease is crime or increase in contentment among he people who have had most use of such libraries, and, while the physical welfare of he great mass of the people has been advanced during the last fifty years, it would be diffice to trace this to the free public library becase we do not know what use of such libra s has been made by the few hundred inver as and captains of industry to whom this peress is mainly due.

It does seem, hever, that the free public library has lessend the power of the demagogue and unscrululous politician to control votes, and that in public life the steadily increasing influence of educated men is, in part, due to the reading facilities which the people now enjoy.

When the author of Ecclesiasticus declared that he that holdeth the plow, the carpenter and workmaster, the smith also sitting by the anvil and considering the iron work, and the potter turning the wheel about, all these trust to their hands, we nout them cannot a city be inhabited, —they hall not be sought for in

public counsel, they shall not sit on the judge's seat, and they shall not be found where parables are spoken, but they will maintain the state of the world, he did not foresee the effect of a system of public education including free public libraries, in a democratic government.

As regards Mr. Howells' suggestion about "reading to stupidity," that is precisely the object of many of the readers of current fiction. They are tired and worried, and they read to forget or to get asleep. The average novel will give this result in from six to ten minutes, and the after effects are not nearly so bad as those of chloral or sulfonal. The novels of five or six years ago will answer this purpose just as well, and twelve new novels a year is an ample allowance for the average free public library. But five-sixths of the other books which are produced - not because the author had anything to say, but because the publisher thought that a book on the beauties of brooks, or on the birds' nests of the Bronx, or on the homes of historical stepmothers or on the lieutenant colonels of the Revolution, would sell well - are usually of little more value in the free public library than the novel; they count for circulation, but they are not read, but merely glanced over - mainly for the pictures.

At the present time public opinion in this country tolerates expressions of great differences of opinion with regard to religion and particular creeds. Recently a few Catholics have made objections to the free public library, upon much the same grounds as those upon which the Church objects to public schools, and demand that in both the school and the library the books provided shall be subject, directly or indirectly, to their censorship. Somewhat similar demands, although not so definite and systematic, are occasionally made in behalf of other sects, and they would no doubt come from a number of other religious and political organizations if it was supposed that there was any chance of their success. The question will usually be decided for each locality by political party requirements, which vary much at short intervals, and there is no

<sup>1</sup> Ecclesia icus, xxxviii, 25-34.

immediate danger to the free public library system from this particular form of opposition, except possibly for a short time in some limited locality. It is necessary to bear in mind, however, that public opinion is much less tolerant in matters of morals and manners than it is in matters of religion, and that in selecting books for circulation this opinion should be considered and respected.

The librarian of the free public library has, as a citizen, the same rights and duties as any other citizen, including the right to express his opinions on religious or political questions, but as a general rule, his influence for good will be greatest when he is not a partisan of any particular policy of either church or state.

As regards the large reference libraries, the selection of books must be made much broader in scope, for even the most ardent propogandist of a particular creed or shade of opinion occasionally wants to see what his opponents are saying in order that he may specify their errors, and does not object to find their publications in the reference library, provided they are carefully put away for the use of experts like himself and are not placed on open shelves consulted by the general public.

The duties and problems of our great reference libraries are in many respects peculiar, but the limits of this address permit of only a brief reference to some of them. One of their duties is to preserve the literature of the day for the use of future scholars and students. Part of the business of the circulating library is to have its books worn out and destroyed in actual service, but the reference library has also another purpose, and the books which give it the greatest value and importance should be carefully preserved.

The relations which should exist between our great reference libraries located in large cities and the rapidly multiplying smaller libraries scattered all over the country merit careful consideration. The amount of public funds which can and should be devoted to public libraries is limited, and these funds should not be employed in doing comparatively unnecessary work. Many of the smaller libraries are now, or soon will be, complaining of want of shelf room, and are at the same time accepting and trying to preserve and catalogue everything that comes to them. of them are preserving books that will not be used by any reader once in five years, and two or three copies of which in the large central reference libraries will be quite sufficient for the needs of the whole country. The remark of President Eliot in his ast annual report that "the increasing rate at which large collections of bc ks grow suggests strongly that some new pulicy is needed concerning the storage of these immense masses of printed matter" is very suggestive; and his idea that if the Congressional Library and the great reference libra es in a few of our largest cities would undertake to store any and all books turned over to them and make them accessible to scholars in all parts of the country, the functions of the other libraries might be considerably amplified, is no doubt a true one.

Whether the great reference libraries could undertake the work thus indicated would depend upon the construction placed on the requirement that all books should be made accessible to scholars in all parts of the country. Whether the other libraries would be disposed to accept the suggestion to turn over their old books not in immediate use, merely because it might seem for the public good so to do, is much more doubtful, and the selection of the useless books involves some questions which would be good topics for discussion in the trustees' section of this association.

It is always possible to show that any book or pamphlet, in any edition, might be called for by some reader, student, or professor if he knew it existed, and the difficulties in selecting books to be discarded are very considerable. Mrs. Toodles' state of mind about things that it might be handy to have in the house is one that librarians well understand. It is no doubt true that in the great majority of libraries of one hundred thousand volume and

upwards, one-fifth of the books are so little used that it would be wiser to dispose of them than to use a fund available for salaries or for the purchase of books for providing additional room. Just at present, in most communities, it seems easier to obtain funds for library buildings than it is to get the means to ensure good service.

Closely connected with this is the question as to the acceptance of gifts of books, especially when made with the condition that they are to be kept together to form a permanent memorial for the donor, While each case must be decided on its individual merits, it may be said in general that the desire for a memorial can be fully met by book-plates and catalogues without the unfortunate and unwise requirement that a certain group of books must always be kept together. Even gifts without restrictions, consisting of one or more cartloads of miscellaneous public documents, odd numbers of periodicals, imperfect files of newspapers, pamphlets of little interest, etc., involve some expense to the library, and very few libraries should try to retain and utilize more than a small part of such material.

General discussion as to what large reference libraries should do is of very little practical interest. The interesting question is, "What should this particular library do?"

Should the Library of Congress obtain and preserve complete files of every newspaper published in North and South America?

Should the Boston Public Library try to obtain complete sets of the public documents of the Southern States?

Should the New York Public Library complete its collection of first editions of American Authors by purchase at current prices?

Should the New York State Library try to make a complete collection in Genealogy?

Should the Checago libraries attempt to make a complete collection of the reports of Insane Asylums?

There are many questions like these which require a knowledge not only of the present contents, the available funds, and the special needs of each library, but also a knowledge of what other libraries are doing, if proper answers are to be given.

The methods of co-operation between the great reference libraries, for the public good and for mutual benefit, are as yet rather local and rudimentary. Some points of agreement have been reached between the Congressional Library, the Boston Public Library, and the New York Public Library, as to the purchase of certain manuscripts and rare books; and in every large city there is more or less co-operation between the greater reference libraries, including the University library, as to purchases, — especially of periodicals. The chief subject thus far considered by them is that of Bibliography.

Many schemes for bibliographies, general, special, annotated, etc., have been suggested, and a few have been or are being tried. Each of these, from the universal bibliography to contain thirty millions of titles, to the bibliography of posters or of Podunk imprints, or of poems and essays condemned by their authors, has at least one admirer and advocate in the person who would like to have charge of the making of it; but when it comes to the question as to what has a commercial value there is great unanimity in the opinion that many of those bibliographies should be paid for, not by the makers or the users, but by government or by some philanthropic individual.

A bibliography is very instructive and useful to the person who makes it, and it is well to give the person having a taste for such work as ample facilities as possible; but mere uncritical lists of all the books and journal articles relating to a given subject, from the commencement of printing to the present time, and without indication as to where the older ones are to be found, are of little use to most libraries or to their readers. Like some speakers, they are too much for the occasion.

A good bibliography can, in most cases, only be made from the books themselves; the labor of its preparation is almost equal to that of writing a critical history of the subject, and therefore the first question in considering it is, Where are the books?

One session of this meeting is to be devotedto this subject of Bibliography, which is an
important one, and I hope that the papers presented, and the discussion to follow, will bring
out some valuable suggestions. These will be
especially interesting just now in view of the
fact that a Bibliographical Department has
been proposed as one of the special lines of
work for the recently organized Carnegie Institution, and upon the scope and plan proposed
for such a department will no doubt depend
the action of the trustees of that corporation.

A considerable part of the bibliographies which would be most useful for reference libraries and those engaged in research work can only be prepared by experts in the different arts and sciences, and there is an increasing demand for such experts in the large reference libraries. Just now there are places for three or four well educated engineers who have the taste and the training required to enable them to do much needed work in the critical bibliography of their art. Every great reference library needs half a dozen such experts in different departments. Where are they?

In considering the questions as to the kinds of bibliographical work the results of which would be most useful to the great majority of the public libraries of this country and as to the means of doing such work, it appears to me that it is best that it should be done under the direction of the Publishing Board of this Association, which has had practical experience in this line, and will always be well informed as to the needs of such libraries.

This opinion was brought to the attention of Mr. Carnegie, with the suggestion that he should give to the American Library Association a special fund, the income of which should be applied to the preparation and publication of such reading lists, indexes, and other bibliographical and library aids as would be specially useful in the circulating libraries of this country. The main part of the income would be expended in employing competent persons to prepare the lists, indexes, etc., and to read proofs. The cost of paper and printing would

be met by sales to the libraries. It was represented that such a gift would be wisely administered by the Publishing Board of the Association, and that the results would be of great value in promoting the circulation of the best books.

In response to this suggestion a check for \$100,000 was sent to me as "a donation for the preparation and publication of reading lists, indexes, and other bibliographical and literar; aids as per (your) letter of March 14th." shall take great pleasure in turning over this money if the Association accepts it for the purposes and under the conditions stated. It is a unique gift from a unique man, who deserves our best thanks.

To diminish or destroy desires in the individual man is the object of one form of Oriental philosophy and of several forms of religion, the result hoped for being the doing away with anxiety, discontent, and fear, and the passive acceptance of what is and of what is to come.

Our work follows an opposite plan; the library aims to stimulate and increase desire as well as to satisfy it, and the general tendency of the free circulating library, as of public education, is to increase discontent rather than to diminish it. A competent librarian will be dissatisfied during most of his working hours, - he will want more books, or more readers, or more room, or a better location, or more assistants, or means to pay better salaries, or all these things together. Some readers also will usually be dissatisfied with the library because of its deficiencies in books, or because of some books which it has, or because the librarian is not sufficiently attentive or is too attentive, or because of the hours, or the excess or was t of heat or ventilation, or because of other readers. All this is an almost necessary part of the business; if neither the librarian nor the readers are dissatisfied, the library is probably dying, or dead. But there is a discontent which is stimulating and leads to something, and there is a discontent which is merely indicative of disease, a grumbling discontent, which resembles the muscular twitchings which occur in some cases

A pessimist has been defined as of paralysis. a person who, having a choice of two evils, is so anxious to be right that he takes both. Don't be a pessimist. Life is short and art is long: you can earn your halos without making your library perfect, but halos are not to be had by waiting or them, nor, as a rule, by hunting for them. It will make very little difference to you fifty years hence whether you got your halo or not, or whether it was a plain ring halo or something solid, but it may make a great deal of d fference to some of the men and women of that time, who are now coming to your children's reading rooms, as to whether you have deserved one or not. Each of you and each of your libraries is a thread in the

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warp of the wonderful web now passing through the loom of time, but a living thread is not altogether dependent on the shuttle of circumstance. It is wise to try to know something of the pattern and to guess at some of the problems of to-morrow, but in the meantime we may not fold our hands and wait because we do not see clearly the way we are to go. We must do our best to meet the plain demands of to-day bearing in mind the warning of Ecclesiastes, "He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. . . . In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, whether this or that."

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